

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 OMB-01 IO-11 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 DHA-02 ORM-02 /081 W

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R 051045Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY LOME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 201

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY COTONOU

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L L O M E 0 2 6 4

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PFOR, DM, TO

SUBJECT: TOGOLESE REPLY TO BENIN CHARGES

REF: COTONOU 0181

1. FOREIGN MINISTER AYI-HOUEYOU HUNLEDE PREDICTABLY DECRIED BENIN'S CHARGES THAT GOT, HIMSELF, AND HIS MINISTRY IN PARTICULAR WERE INVOLVED IN ASSISTING BENINOIS PLOTTERS AGAINST KEREKOU REGIME. IN AN INTERVIEW TELEVISED FEB. 3, HUNLEDE RIDICULED CHARGES ON TWO GROUNDS: LACK OF EVIDENCE AND TOGO TOO BUSY WITH DEVELOPMENT TO BE BOTHERED WITH PLOTTING AGAINST NEIGHBORS.

2. ACCORDING TO HUNLEDE, BENIN'S ALLEGATIONS WAS THAT ENVELOPE FOUND IN COURSE OF SEARCH OF HOUSE OF BENINOIS SUSPECT INDICATED THAT PLOTTERS' CORRESPONDENCE HAD BEEN TRANSMITTED VIA TOGOLESE DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS FROM LAGOS TO LOME AND BORE NAMES OF HOMAWOO (TOGOLESE CHIEF OF PROTOCOL), ZINSOU (BENINOIS EXILE LEADER) AND HUNTODJI (SUPPOSEDLY HUNLEDE HIMSELF). HUNLEDE SPECULATES
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MOCKINGLY THAT PERHAPS THE HUNTONDJI IS A LAWYER WHO DISAPPEARED

IN THE KOVACKS AFFAIR (IN WHICH KEREKOU WAS ACCUSED OF CORRUPTION). IN ANY CASE TO BUILD CASE ON PHONETIC RESEMBLANCE IS RIDICULOUS.

3. HUNLEDE'S OTHER THEME --THAT TOGO TOO BUSY DEVELOPING TO INVOLVE ITSELF IN PLOTS--WAS EMBELLISHED WITH MOCK PLEA THAT IF BENIN HAS INTERNAL PROBLEMS LET IT RESOLVE THEM ITSELF, NOT DISTRACT ITS PEOPLE'S ATTENTION BY ACCUSING TOGO. HE NOTED THAT NIGERIA WAS ALSO SCENE OF ANTI-BENIN PLOTTING, ACCORDING TO BENIN'S VERSION OF EVENTS, BUT ATTACK AND BORDER CLOSING DIRECTED SOLELY AGAINST TOGO OBVIOUSLY BECAUSE TOGO IS SMALLER (TEXT POUNCHED COTONOU).

4. COMMENT: HUNLEDE'S DENIAL FOCUSES ON HIS AND GOT NON-INVOLVEMENT IN PLOTTING,BUT DOES NOT SPECIFICALLY DENY TOGOLESE DIPLOMATIC POUCH WAS PLACED AT DISPOSITION OF BENIN PLOTTERS/REFUGEES. WHEN HUNLEDE SAYS CITING NAMES OF FEW EMPLOYEES OF FOREIGN OFFICE IN AFFAIR DOES NOT PROVE THAT GOT HAS PLOTTED AGAINST BENIN, HE MAY BE PREPARING FALL-BACK POSITION THAT INVOLVEMENT BY TOGOLESE OFFICIALS WAS UNAUTHORIZED. GOT, OF COURSE, KEEPS TABS ON BENINOIS EXILES HERE (INCLUDING ZINSOU'S OCCASIONAL VISITS) AND IF THEY ARE DISCREET IN THEIR ANTI-BENIN ACTIVITIES, DOES NOT APPARENTLY INTERFERE.

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